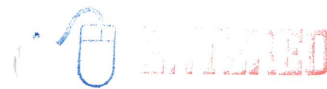


**Department of Energy**  
 Carlsbad Field Office  
 P. O. Box 3090  
 Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221  
 03 FEB 2003



Mr. Steve Zappe, Project Leader (WIPP)  
 Hazardous Waste Permits Program  
 Hazardous Waste Bureau  
 New Mexico Environment Department  
 2909 E. Rodeo Dr. Bldg 1  
 Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-6303

Subject: Notification of Intent to Commence Closure of WIPP HWDU Panel 1

Dear Mr. Zappe:

The purpose of this letter is to inform the NMED of the intent of the Permittees to commence closure of HWDU Panel 1 at the WIPP. This notification fulfills the requirements of the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit (NM4890139088-TSDF), Permit Condition II.L.3 and Permit Attachment I-1d(1) to notify NMED 60 days prior to the date on which closure activities are scheduled to begin, and 30 days prior to placing the final waste in a panel, respectively.

The Department of Energy (DOE) expects that the last waste containers will be placed in Panel 1 on or about March 14, 2003. Closure of Room 1 (i.e., placement of brattice cloth ventilation barriers) will take place in conjunction with Panel 1 decommissioning activities and is expected to be completed on or about March 18, 2003. The radiation contamination surveys of the intake and exhaust drifts should be completed on or about March 21, 2003. No decontamination is anticipated. Other preliminary activities such as staging of equipment and setting up ventilation should be completed on or about March 28, 2003. Closure construction activities will then commence and DOE anticipates that this will occur on or about April 11, 2003. DOE intends to close Panel 1 without unnecessary delay and in compliance with the HWDF Permit as amended. The dates identified herein are forecast dates and are subject to change due to shipping delays or other unforeseen events.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Jody Plum at (505) 234-7462.

Sincerely,

Dr. Inés R. Tray, CBFO Manager  
 U.S. Department of Energy

S.D. Warren, President  
 Washington TRU Solutions



Mr. Steve Zappe

-2-

03 FEB 2003

cc:

J. Bearzi, NMED

J. Kieling, NMED

C. Walker, Trinity Engineering